UNITED NATIONS **S**

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1998/985
22 October 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 21 OCTOBER 1998 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to convey the attached communication, dated 8 October 1998, which I have received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

I should be grateful if you would bring it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

98-31595 (E) 221098

/...

Annex

Letter dated 8 October 1998 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolution 1088 (1996), I attach the twenty-first monthly report on the operations of the Stabilization Force (SFOR) (see appendix). I would appreciate your making this report available to the Security Council.

(Signed) Javier SOLANA

Appendix

Report to the Security Council on the operations of the Stabilization Force

1. There are approximately 36,000 troops currently deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, with contributions for all countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and from 21 non-NATO countries.

2. Over the reporting period (21 August-20 September) the Stabilization Force (SFOR) continued to conduct surveillance and reconnaissance by means of ground and air patrols. Approximately 2,990 sorties were flown by combat aircraft, with the SFOR helicopter fleet flying approximately 138 hours.

3. SFOR continues to monitor crossing points on the border with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and to inspect government factories in order to help ensure compliance with the prohibition on the transport of weapons established by the Security Council in its resolution 1160 (1998). No reports of non-compliance have been received in the current reporting period.

4. SFOR provided enhanced support to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) during the preparations for, and conduct of, the elections which were held in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 12 and 13 September. SFOR troops provided a safe and secure environment for the elections and provided communications support to OSCE throughout the polling period. In addition, SFOR troops guarded the OSCE warehouse at Rajlovac, provided convoy escort and security during the road transportation of sensitive election materials, and guarded the OSCE counting centre at Lukavica. On polling days, SFOR provided helicopter support to OSCE.

5. During the run-up to the elections, SFOR provided a secure environment at selected sites and helicopter transportation to support the surveillance by the United Nations International Police Task Force (IPTF) of crossing points over the Inter-Entity Boundary Line and over the border of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Cooperation and compliance by the parties

6. The parties remain substantially compliant with most military provisions of the Peace Agreement. Although the election period was largely uneventful, there were several isolated incidents relating to the return of refugees. At the beginning of September, Bosnian Croats threatened Bosniac returnees in the Mostar and Stolac areas and intimidated Bosnian Serb returnees in Drvar. During the same period, Bosnian Serbs threatened Bosniac returnees in the Modrica area.

7. Over the reporting period, SFOR troops conducted a total of 251 inspections of military weapon storage sites: 83 Bosniac; 42 Bosnian Croat; 102 Bosnian Serb; and 24 Federation. No significant discrepancies were noted, and no weapons confiscated. In line with SFOR policy to reduce the overall number of weapon sites, 49 of the 136 weapon storage sites which are to be closed between 10 June 1998 and 28 February 1999 have now been closed.

8. The Police Anti-Terrorist Brigade of the Republika Srpska Specialist Police remains compliant with the terms of the Peace Agreement and with the requirements set out by SFOR on 15 August 1997. The Police Restructuring and Training Programme is continuing, led by IPTF and monitored by SFOR. Discussions are currently under way between the Commander of SFOR and IPTF to reach an agreement which would enable the transfer of the Police Anti-Terrorist Brigade from military to civilian status under the terms of the Peace Agreement. The Police Unit for the Protection of Persons and Buildings was officially disbanded on 16 August 1998.

9. Over the reporting period, SFOR troops monitored a total of 702 training and movement activities: 152 Bosniac; 33 Bosnian Croat; 366 Bosnian Serb; and 151 Federation. The following training and movement bans were imposed by SFOR: from 27 to 31 August, on the 55th Engineer Regiment, the 55th Medical Battalion and the 55th Military Police Company of the Bosnian Serb Army, owing to the discovery of a demining team in an unauthorized site; a two-week ban on the Bosnian Serb Air Force and its Air Defence units owing to the failure of the Air Force Commander to attend a meeting of the Joint Military Commission in the Multi-National Division South West on 21 August 1998; and a ban on all units of the Entity Armed Forces from 6 to 20 September because of the elections.

10. Between 16 August and 13 September, the Entity Armed Forces, now accredited to the Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Centre, conducted 792 demining activities, removing a total of 332 devices (17 anti-tank mines, 262 anti-personnel mines and 53 items of unexploded ordnance) from 28,620 square metres of land. SFOR troops monitored 699 demining activities. There are currently no bans imposed on the Entity Armed Forces for non-compliance with mine-clearing operations.

Cooperation with international institutions

11. Within its capabilities, SFOR continues to provide assistance to the international organizations in the theatre, in cooperation with OSCE, IPTF (including in its inspections of local police stations), the Office of the High Representative, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

12. As noted above, over the reporting period, SFOR enhanced its support to OSCE during the preparations for, and conduct of, the recent elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

13. SFOR continues to provide assistance to the Office of the High Representative in the field of civil air traffic. Civil operations at Tuzla airport were expected to be inaugurated in October. With regard to Sarajevo airport, the revisions to the Memorandum of Understanding which will permit cargo operations and allow commercial aircraft to remain on the apron overnight have now been approved by the Council of Ministers. SFOR personnel are currently dealing with an amendment to the Memorandum of Understanding for Banja Luka airport, which would allow overnight parking there. In addition, SFOR is seeking to introduce a traffic management area around Banja Luka which would assist pilots in landing.

14. SFOR continues to play an active role in providing support to the efforts by the Office of the High Representative to establish common institutions. Although the Standing Committee on Military Matters has not met since 13 August because of the summer break and the election period, SFOR has facilitated an agreement between the Entity Armed Forces and the Presidency which will provide for VIP military helicopter flights across the Inter-Entity Boundary Line. It is hoped that this agreement will be signed at the next meeting of the Standing Committee. In addition, SFOR has supported the work of OSCE, with the Standing Committee to hold a seminar in October which will address the management of natural or civil disasters. SFOR will take the lead on the military-to-military aspects of the seminar.

Outlook

15. Acts of intimidation and violence towards displaced persons and refugees can be expected to continue, and the situation may be exacerbated by the influx of refugees from Kosovo (currently numbering around 6,800).